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Ripple

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Ripple

By Reed Gifford

We were the fourth house
to be built-
out on Vista View.

To tappings of nail-guns
and echoed classic-rock on
one-o-four point-one, *The Eagle*,
my brother and I spent those
first summer months combing
our surrounding new acre.

Commissioned by Mom
to track down and transplant
jagged desert rocks, found hiding
in the shadow of parched sage,
woven in the shoots of bunchgrass,
and littered along the tumbleweed's trail.
We went to work, out on that acre.

Hauling our five-gallon Ace-bucket,
we'd set it central in each square area
and, one-by-one, uproot any rocks
big enough to dent or stall
the swish blades on our push-mower,
while Mom edged out her garden
with our findings.

By the end of that summer
the acre surrounding
our house on Vista View
sat flat and rockless.
The weeds had been mowed
tight as mere dust

and settled atop
the windswept desert floor.

So when the long-fall
rains came
water gathered in stagnant
muddy pools-
out on our acre-
where mallard ducks
would light before the dawn light and settle
never to ripple the puddle again
until cast-off into flight.

Then one morning,
early before school,
Mom woke us up
and had us put on
our winter bibs
and jackets,
and rushed us out the door
to greet the chilly morning air,
to get to know it's gray sky-drizzles,
and to have us splash about
our endless acre of puddles-
scattering ducks
like the worries we need not have
as children
nor as brothers.

For, we do not live
out on Vista View anymore,
and I never play-
in puddles.